Characters

- CLARA

  "Leading Roles" are played by actors who look exactly like:

- BETTE DAVIS
- PAUL HENREID
- JEAN PETERS
- MARLON BRANDO
- MONTGOMERY CLIFT
- SHELLEY WINTERS

  (They all look exactly like their movie roles.)

  Supporting roles by

- the mother
- the father
- the husband

(They all look like photographs Clara keeps of them except when they're in the hospital.)

NOTES: *The movie music throughout is romantic*.

The ship, the deck, the railings and the dark boat can all be done with lights and silhouettes.

All the colors are shades of black and white.

These movie stars are romantic and moving, never camp or farcical, and the attitudes of the supporting players to the movie stars is deadly serious.

The movie music sometimes plays at intervals when Clara's thought is still.

SCENES:

I. Hospital lobby and *Now Voyager*

II. Brother's room and *Viva Zapata*

III. Clara's old room and *A Place in the Sun*

Prologue

Dark stage. From darkness center appears the COLUMBIA PICTURES LADY *in a bright light*.

COLUMBIA PICTURES LADY

Summer, New York, 1955. Summer, Ohio, 1963. The scenes are *Now Voyager, Viva Zapata* and *A Place In The Sun*.

The leading roles are played by Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, Jean Peters, Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift and Shelley Winters. Supporting roles are played by the mother, the father, the husband. A bit role is played by Clara.

Now Voyager takes place in the hospital lobby.

Viva Zapata takes place in the brother's room.

A Place In The Sun takes place in Clara's old room.

June 1963.

My producer is Joel Steinberg. He looks different from what I once thought, not at all like that picture in *Vogue*. He was in *Vogue* with a group of people who were going to do a musical about Socrates. In the photograph Joel's hair looked dark and his skin smooth. In real life his skin is blotched. Everyone says he drinks a lot.

Lately I think often of killing myself. Eddie Jr˙ plays outside in the playground. I'm very lonely... Met Lee Strasberg: the members of the playwrights unit were invited to watch his scene. Geraldine Page, Rip Torn and Norman Mailer were there.... I wonder why I lie so much to my mother about how I feel.... My father once said his life has been nothing but a life of hypocrisy and that's why his photograph smiled. While Eddie Jr˙ plays outside I read Edith Wharton, a book on Egypt and Chinua Achebe. Leroi Jones, Ted Joans and Allen Ginsburg are reading in the Village. Eddie conies every evening right before dark. He wants to know if I'll go back to him for the sake of our son.

(She fades. At the back of the stage as in a distance a dim light goes on a large doorway in the hospital. Visible is the foot of the white hospital bed and a figure lying upon it. Movie music. CLARA *stands at the doorway of the room. She is a Negro woman of thirty-three wearing a maternity dress. She does not enter the room but turns away and stands very still. Movie music.)*

CLARA

(Reflective; very still facing away from the room.)

My brother is the same... my father is coming... very depressed.

Before I left New York I got my typewriter from the pawnshop. I'm terribly tired, trying to do a page a day, yet my play is corning together.

Each day I wonder with what or with whom can I co-exist in a true union?

(She turns and stares into her brothers room. Scene fades out; then bright lights that convey an ocean liner in motion.)

Scene 1

SCENE I

Movie music. On the deck of the ocean liner from Now Voyager *are* BETTE DAVIS *and* PAUL HEKREID.

They sit at a table slightly off stage center. BETTE DAVIS *has on a large white summer hat and* PAUL HENREID *a dark summer suit. The light is romantic and glamorous. Beyond backstage left are deck chairs. It is bright sunlight on the deck.*

BETTE DAVIS

(To Paul.)

June 1955.

When I have the baby I wonder will I turn into a river of blood and die? My mother almost died when I was born. I've always felt sad that I couldn't have been an angel of mercy to my father and mother and saved them from their torment.

I used to hope when I was a little girl that one day I would rise above them, an angel with glowing wings and cover them with peace. But I failed. When I came among them it seems to me I did not bring them peace... but made them more disconsolate. The crosses they bore always made me sad.

The one reality I wanted never came true... to be their angel of mercy to unite them. I keep remembering the time my mother threatened to kill my father with the shot gun. I keep remembering my father's going away to marry a girl who talked to willow trees.

(Onto the deck wander the MOTHER, *the* FATHER, *and the* HUSBAND. *They are Negroes. The parents are as they were when young in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. The* MOTHER *is small, pale and very beautiful. She has on a white summer dress and white shoes. The* FATHER *is small and dark skinned. He has on a Morehouse sweater, knickers and a cap. They both are emotional and nervous. In presence both are romanticized. The* HUSBAND *is twenty-eight and handsome. He is dressed as in the summer of 1955 wearing a seersucker suit from Kleins that cost thirteen dollars.)*

BETTE DAVIS

In the scrapbook that my father left is a picture of my mother in Savannah, Georgia in 1929.

MOTHER

(Sitting down in a deck chair, takes a cigarette out of a beaded purse and smokes nervously. She speaks bitterly in a voice with a strong Georgia accent.)

In our Georgia town the white people lived on one side. It had pavement on the streets and sidewalks and mail was delivered. The Negroes lived on the other side and the roads were dirt and had no sidewalk and you had to go to the post office to pick up your mail. In the center of Main Street was a fountain and white people drank on one side and Negroes drank on the other.

When a Negro bought something in a store he couldn't try it on. A Negro couldn't sit down at the soda fountain in the drug store but had to take his drink out. In the movies at Montefore you had to go in the side and up the stairs and sit in the last four rows.

When you arrived on the train from Cincinnati the first thing you saw was the WHITE AND COLORED signs at the depot. White people had one waiting room and we Negroes had another. We sat in only two cars and white people had the rest of the train.

(She is facing PAUL HENREID *and* BETTE DAVIS. *The* FATHER *and the* HUSBAND *sit in deck chairs*

that face the other side of the sea. The FATHER *also smokes. He sits hunched over with his head down thinking. The* HUSBAND *takes on old test book out of a battered briefcase and starts to study. He looks exhausted and has dark circles under his eyes. His suit is worn.)*

BETTE DAVIS

My father used to say John Hope Franklin, Du Bois and Benjamin Mays were fine men.

(Bright sunlight on FATHER *sitting on other side of deck*. FATHER *gets up and comes toward them... to* BETTE DAVIS.)

FATHER

Cleveland is a place for opportunity leadership, a progressive city, a place for education, a chance to come out of the back woods of Georgia. We Negro leaders dream of leading our people out of the wilderness.

(He passes her and goes along the deck whistling. Movie music. BETTE DAVIS *stands up looking after the* FATHER... *then distractedly to* PAUL HENREID.)

BETTE DAVIS

(Very passionate.)

I'd give anything in the world if I could just once talk to Jesus.

Sometimes he walks through my room but he doesn't stop long enough for us to talk... he has an aureole.

(Then to the FATHER *who is almost out of sight on the deck whistling.)*

Why did you marry the girl who talked to willow trees?

(To PAUL HENREID.)

He left us to marry a girl who talked to willow trees.

*(*FATHER *is whistling*, MOTHER *is smoking, then the* FATHER *vanishes into a door on deck*. BETTE DAVIS *walks down to railing*. PAUL HENREID *follows her.)*

BETTE DAVIS

June 1955.

My mother said when she was a girl in the summers she didn't like to go out. She'd sit in the house and help her grandmother iron or shell peas and sometimes she'd sit on the steps.

My father used to come and sit on the steps. He asked her for her first "date." They went for a walk up the

road and had an ice cream at Miss Ida's Icecream Parlor and walked back down the road. She was fifteen.

My mother says that my father was one of the most well thought of boys in the town, Negro or white. And he was so friendly. He always had a friendly word for everybody.

He used to tell my mother his dreams how he was going to go up north. There was opportunity for Negroes

up north and when he was finished at Morehouse he was going to get a job in someplace like New York.

And she said when she walked down the road with my father people were so friendly.

He organized a colored baseball team in Montefore and he was the Captain. And she used to go and watch him play baseball and everybody called him "Cap,"

Seven more months and the baby.

Eddie and I don't talk too much these days.

Very often I try to be in bed by the time he comes home.

Most nights I'm wide awake until at least four. I wake up about eight and then I have a headache.

When I'm wide awake I see Jesus a lot.

My mother is giving us the money for the doctor bill. Eddie told her he will pay it back.

Also got a letter from her; it said I hope things work out for you both. And pray, pray sometimes. Love Mother.

We also got a letter from Eddie's mother. Eddie's brother had told her that Eddie and I were having some problems. In her letter which was enclosed in a card she said when Eddie's sister had visited us she noticed that Eddie and I don't go to church. She said we mustn't forget the Lord, because God takes care of everything... God gives us peace and no matter what problems Eddie and I

were having if we trusted in Him God would help us. It was the only letter from Eddie's mother that I ever saved.

Even though the card was Hallmark.

July 1955.

Eddie doesn't seem like the same person since he came back from Korea. And now I'm pregnant again. When I lost the baby he was thousands of miles away. All that bleeding. I'll never forgive him. The Red Cross let him send me a telegram to say he was sorry. I can't believe we used to be so in love on the campus and park the car and kiss and kiss. Yet I was a virgin when we married. A virgin who was to bleed and bleed... when I was in the hospital all I had was a photograph of Eddie in GI clothes standing in a woods in Korea.

(Pause.)

Eddie and I went to the Thalia on 95th and Broadway. There's a film festival this summer. We saw *Double Indemnity, The Red Shoes* and *A Place In The Sun*. Next week *Viva Zapata* is coming. Afterwards we went to Reinzis on Macdougal Street and had Viennese coffee. We forced an enthusiasm we didn't feel. We took the subway back up to 116th Street and walked to Bencroft Hall. In the middle of the night I woke up and wrote in my diary.

(A bright light at hospital doorway. CLARA *younger, fragile, anxious. Movie music. She leaves hospital doorway and comes onto the deck from the door her father entered. She wears maternity dress, white wedgies,. her hair is straightened as in the fifties. She has a passive beauty and is totally preoccupied. She pays no attention to anyone, only writing in a notebook. Her movie stars speak for her*. CLARA *lets her*

movie stars star in her life, BETTE DAVIS *and* PAUL

HENREID *are at the railing. The* MOTHER *is smoking. The* HUSBAND *gets up and comes across the deck carrying his battered briefcase. He speaks to* CLARA *who looks away*. PAUL HENREID *goes on staring at the sea.)*

HUSBAND

Clara, please tell me everything the doctor said about the delivery and how many days you'll be in the hospital.

(Instead of CLARA, BETTE DAVIS *replies*. PAUL HENREID *is oblivious of him.)*

BETTE DAVIS

(Very remote.)

I get very jealous of you Eddie. You're doing something with your life.

(He tries to kiss CLARA. *She moves away and walks along the deck and writes in notebook.)*

BETTE DAVIS

(To Eddie.)

Eddie, do you think I have floating anxiety? You said everyone in Korea had floating anxiety. I think I might have it.

(Pause.)

Do you think I'm catatonic?

EDDIE

(Staringat Clara.)

I'm late to class now. We'll talk when I come home.

(He leaves.)

When I get paid I'm going to take you to Birdland. Dizzy's coming back.

(Movie music.)

CLARA

July.

I can't sleep. My head always full of thoughts night and day. I feel so nervous. Sometimes I hardly hear what people are saying. I'm writing a lot of my play, I don't want to show it to anyone though. Suppose it's no good.

(Reads

her play.)

They are dragging his body across the green his white hair hanging down. They are taking off his shoes and he is stiff. I must get into the chapel to see him. I must. He is my blood father. God, let me in to his burial.

(He grabs her down center. She, kneeling.)

I call God and the Owl answers.

(Softer.)

It haunts my Tower calling, its feathers are blowing against the cell wall, speckled in the garden on the fig tree, it comes, feathered, great hollow-eyed with yellow skin and yellow eyes, the flying bastard. From my Tower I keep calling and the only answer is the Owl, God.

(Pause. Stands.)

I am only yearning for our kingdom, God.

(Movie music.)

BETTE DAVIS

(At railing.)

My father tried to commit suicide once when I was in High School. It was the afternoon he was presented an award by the Mayor of Cleveland at a banquet celebrating the completion of the New Settlement building. It had taken my father seven years to raise money for the New Settlement which was the center of Negro life in our community. He was given credit for being the one without whom it couldn't have been done. It was his biggest achievement.

I went upstairs and found him whistling in his room. I asked him what was wrong. I want to see my dead mama and papa he said, that's all I really live for is to see my mama and papa. I stared at him. As I was about to leave the room he said I've been waiting to jump off the roof of the Settlement for a long time. I just had to wait until it was completed... and he went on whistling.

He had tried to jump off the roof but had fallen on a scaffold.

(Movie music. The deck has grown dark except for the light

on BETTE DAVIS *and* PAUL HENREID *and* CLARA.)

CLARA

I loved the wedding night scene from *Viva Zapata* and the scene where the peasants met Zapata on the road and forced the soldiers to take the rope from his neck ... when they shot Zapata at the end I cried.

(Deck darker. She walks along the deck and into door, leaving PAUL HENREID *and* BETTE DAVIS *at railing. She arrives at the hospital doorway, then enters her brothers room, standing at the foot of his bed. Her brother is in a coma.)*

CLARA

(To her brother.)

Once I asked you romantically when you came back to the United States on a short leave, how do you like Europe Wally? You were silent. Finally you said, I get into a lot of fights with the Germans. You stared at me. And got up and went into the dining room to the dark sideboard and got a drink.

(Darkness. Movie music.)

Scene 2

SCENE II

Hospital room and Viva Zapata. *The hospital bed is now totally visible. In it lies Wally in a white gown. The light of the room is twilight on a summer evening. Clara's brother is handsome and in his late twenties. Beyond the bed is steel hospital apparatus. Clara stands by her brothers bedside. There is no real separation from the hospital room and* Viva Zapata *and the ship lights as there should have been none in* Now Voyager. *Simultaneously brighter lights come up stage center. Wedding night scene in* Viva Zapata. *Yet it is still the stateroom within the ship. Movie music*. MARLON BRANDO *and* JEAN PETERS *are sitting on the bed. They are both dressed as in* Viva Zapata.

JEAN PETERS

(To Brando.)

July 11.

I saw my father today. He's come from Georgia to see my brother. He lives in Savannah with his second wife. He seemed smaller and hunched over. When I was young he seemed energetic, speaking before civic groups and rallying people to give money to the Negro Settlement.

In the last years he seems introspective, petty and angry. Today he was wearing a white nylon sports shirt that looked slightly too big... his dark arms thin. He had on a little straw sport hat cocked slightly to the side.

We stood together in my brother's room. My father touched my brother's bare foot with his hand. My brother is in a coma.

(Silent.)

Eddie and I were married downstairs in this house. My brother was best man. We went to Colorado, but soon after Eddie was sent to Korea. My mother has always said that she felt if she and my father hadn't been fighting so much maybe I wouldn't have lost the baby. After I lost the baby I stopped writing to Eddie and decided I wanted to get a divorce when he came back from Korea. He hadn't been at Columbia long before I got pregnant again with Eddie Jr.

(MARLON BRANDO *listens. They kiss tenderly She stands up. She is bleeding. She falls back on her bed*. BRANDO *pulls a sheet out from under her. The sheets are black. Movie music.)*

JEAN PETERS

The doctor says I have to stay in bed when I'm not at the hospital.

(From now until the end MARLON BRANDO *continuously helps* JEAN PETERS *change sheets. He puts the black sheets on the floor around them.)*

CLARA

(To her brother, at the same time.)

Wally, you just have to get well. I know you will, even though you do not move or speak.

(Sits down by his bedside watching him. Her MOTHER *enters. She is wearing a rose colored summer dress and small hat. The mother is in her fifties now. She sits down by her son's bedside and holds his hand. Silence in the room. The light of the room is constant twilight. They are in the constant dim twilight while* BRANDO *and* PETERS *star in a dazzling wedding night light. Mexican peasant wedding music, Zapata remains throughout compassionate, heroic, tender. While* CLARA *and her* MOTHER *talk* BRANDO *and* PETERS *sit on the bed, then enact the Zapata teach-me-to-read scene in which* BRANDO *asks* PETERS *to get him a book and teach him to read.)*

MOTHER

What did I do? What did I do?

CLARA

What do you mean?

MOTHER

I don't know what I did to make my children so unhappy.

*(*JEAN PETERS *gets book for* BRANDO. *)*

CLARA

I'm not unhappy mother.

MOTHER

Yes you are.

CLARA

I'm not unhappy. I'm very happy. I just want to be a writer. Please don't think I'm unhappy.

MOTHER

Your family's not together and you don't seem happy.

(They sit and read.)

CLARA

I'm very happy mother. Very. I've just won an award and I'm going to have a play produced. I'm very happy.

(Silence. The mother straightens the sheet on her son's bed.)

MOTHER

When you grow up in boarding school like I did, the thing you dream of most is to see your children together with their families.

CLARA

Mother you mustn't think I'm unhappy because I am, I really am, very happy.

MOTHER

I just pray you'll soon get yourself together and make some decisions about your life. I pray for you every night. Shouldn't you go back to Eddie especially since you're pregnant?

(There are shadows of the ship's lights as if Now Voyager *is still in motion.)*

CLARA

Mother, Eddie doesn't understand me.

(Silence. Twilight dimmer, MOTHER *holds Watty's hand. Movie light bright on* JEAN PETERS *and* MARLON BRANDO. *)*

JEAN PETERS

My brother Wally's still alive.

CLARA

(To her diary)

Wally was in an accident. A telegram from my mother. Your brother was in an automobile accident... has been unconscious since last night in St˙ Luke's hospital. Love, Mother.

JEAN PETERS

Depressed.

CLARA

Came to Cleveland. Eddie came to La

Guardia to bring me money for my plane ticket and to say he was sorry about Wally who was best man at our wedding. Eddie looks at me with such sadness. It fills me with hatred for him and myself.

*(*BRANDO *is at the window looking down on the peasants. Mexican wedding music.)*

JEAN PETERS

Very depressed, and afraid at night since Eddie and I separated. I try to write a page a day on another play. It's going to be called a Lesson In Dead Language. The main image is a girl in a white organdy dress covered with menstrual blood.

*(*CLARA *is writing in her diary. Her* MOTHER *sits holding Wally's hand*, BRANDO *stares out the window*, JEAN PETERS *sits on the bed*. Now Voyager *ship, shadows and light.)*

CLARA

It is twilight outside and very warm. The window faces a lawn, very green, with a fountain beyond. Wally

does not speak or move. He is in a coma.

(Twilight dims.)

It bothers me that Eddie had to give me money for the ticket to come home. I don't have any money of my own: the option from my play is gone and I don't know how I will be able to work and take care of Eddie Jr. Maybe Eddie and I should go back together.

*(*FATHER *enters the room, stands at the foot of his sons bed. He is in his fifties now and wears a white nylon sports shirt a little too big, his dark arms thin, baggy pants and a little straw sports hat cocked to the side. He has been drinking. The moment he enters the*

room the mother takes out a cigarette and starts to nervously smoke. They do not look at each other. He speaks to CLARA, *then glances in the direction of the* MOTHER. *He then touches his son's bare feet. Wally is lying on his back, his hands to his sides*. CLARA *gets up and goes to the window*. BRANDO *comes back and sits on the bed next to* JEAN PETERS. *They all remain for a long while silent. Suddenly the* MOTHER *goes and throws herself into her daughter's arms and cries.)*

MOTHER

The doctor said he doesn't see how Wally has much of a chance of surviving: his brain is damaged.

(She clings to her daughter and cries. Simultaneously.)

JEAN PETERS

(To BRANDO. *)*

I'm writing on my play. It's about a girl who turns into an Owl. Ow.

(Recites from her writings.)

He came to me in the outhouse, in the fig tree. He told me, You are an owl, I am your beginning. I call God and the Owl answers. It haunts my tower, calling.

(Silence. FATHER *slightly drunk goes toward his former wife and his daughter. The* MOTHER *runs out of the room into the lobby)*

MOTHER

I did everything to make you happy and still you left me for another woman.

*(*CLARA *stares out of the window*. FATHER *follows the* MOTHER *into the lobby and stares at her*. JEAN PETERS *stands up. She is bleeding. She falls back on the bed*. MARLON BRANDO *pulls a sheet out from under her. The sheets are black. Movie music.)*

JEAN PETERS

The doctor says I have to stay in bed when I'm not at the hospital.

(From now until the end MARLON BRANDO *continuously helps* JEAN PETERS *change sheets. He puts the black sheets on the floor around them.)*

JEAN PETERS

This reminds me of when Eddie was in Korea and I had the miscarriage. For days there was blood on the sheets. Eddie's letters from Korea were about a green hill. He sent me photographs of himself. The Red Cross, the letter said, says I cannot call you and I cannot come.

For a soldier to come home there has to be a death in the family.

MOTHER

(In the hallway she breaks down further.)

I have never wanted to go back to the south to live. I hate it. I suffered nothing but humiliation and why should I have gone back there?

FATHER

You ought to have gone back with me. It's what I wanted to do.

MOTHER

I never wanted to go back.

FATHER

You yellow bastard. You're a yellow bastard. That's why you didn't want to go back.

MOTHER

You black nigger.

JEAN PETERS

(Reciting her play.)

I call God and the Owl answers, it haunts my tower, calling, its feathers are blowing against the cell wall, it comes feathered, great hollow-eyes ... with yellow skin and yellow eyes, the flying bastard. From my tower I keep calling and the only answer is the Owl.

July 8 I got a telegram from my mother. It said your brother has been in an accident and has been unconscious

since last night in St˙ Luke's hospital. Love, Mother. I came home.

My brother is in a white gown on white sheets.

(The MOTHER *and the* FATHER *walk away from one another. A sudden bright light on the Hospital Lobby and on Wally's room*. CLARA *has come to the doorway and watches her parents.)*

MOTHER

(To both her former husband and her daughter.)

I was asleep and the police called and told me Wally didn't feel well and would I please come down to the police station and pick him up. When I arrived at the police station they told me they had just taken him to the hospital because he felt worse and they would drive to the hospital. When I arrived here the doctor told

me the truth: Wally's car had crashed into another car at an intersection and Wally had been thrown from the car, his body hitting a mail box and he was close to death.

(Darkness.)

Scene 3

SCENE III

JEAN PETERS *and* BRANDO *are still sitting in* Viva Zapata *but now there are photographs above the bed of* CLARA'S *parents when they were young, as they were in* Now Voyager. *Wally's room is dark. Lights of the ship from* Now Voyager.

JEAN PETERS

Wally is not expected to live.

(She tries to stand.)

He does not move. He is in a coma.

(Pause.)

There are so many memories in this house. The rooms besiege me. My brother has been living here in his old room with my mother. He is separated from his wife and every night has been driving his car crazily around the street where she now lives. On one of these nights was when he had the accident.

*(*JEAN PETERS *and* BRANDO *stare at each other. A small dark boat from side opposite Wally's room. In it are* SHELLEY WINTERS *and* MONTGOMERY CLIFT. CLARA *sits behind* SHELLEY WINTERS *writing in her notebook*. MONTGOMERY CLIFT *is rowing. It is* A Place In The Sun. *Movie music*. BRANDO *and* JEAN PETERS *continue to change sheets.)*

CLARA

I am bleeding. When I'm not at the hospital I have to stay in bed. I am writing my poems. Eddie's come from New York to see my brother. My brother does not speak or move.

(MONTGOMERY CLIFT *silently rows dark boat across*. CLARA *has on a nightgown and looks as if she has been very sick, and heartbroken by her brothers accident*. MONTGOMERY CLIFT, *as was* HENREID *and* BRANDO, *is mute. If they did speak they would speak lines from their actual movies. As the boat comes across* BRANDO *and* PETERS *are still. Movie music*. EDDIE *comes in room with* JEAN PETERS *and* BRANDO. *He still has his textbook and briefcase*. SHELLEY WINTERS *sits opposite* MONTGOMERY CLIFT *as in* A Place In The Sun. CLARA *is writing in her notebook.)*

EDDIE

(To JEAN PETERS; *simultaneously* CLARA *is writing in her diary.)*

Are you sure you want to go on

with this?

JEAN PETERS

This?

EDDIE

You know what I mean, this obsession of yours?

JEAN PETERS

Obsession?

EDDIE

Yes, this obsession to be a writer?

JEAN PETERS

Of course I'm sure.

*(*BRANDO *is reading*. CLARA *from the boat.)*

CLARA

I think the Steinbergs have lost interest in my play. I got a letter from them that said they have to go to Italy and would be in touch when they came back.

EDDIE

I have enough money for us to live well with my teaching. We could all be so happy.

CLARA

(From boat.)

Ever since I was twelve I have secretly dreamed of being a writer. Everyone says it's unrealistic for a Negro to want to write.

Eddie says I've become shy and secretive and I can't accept the passage of time, and that my diaries consume me and that my diaries make me a spectator watching my life like watching a black and white movie.

He thinks sometimes ... to me my life is one of my black and white movies that I love so ... with me playing a bit part.

EDDIE

(To JEAN PETERS *looking up at the photographs.)*

I wonder about your obsession to write about your parents when they were young. You didn't know them. Your mother's not young, your father's not young and we are not that young couple who came to New York in 1955, yet all you ever say to me is Eddie you don't seem the same since you came back from Korea.

*(*EDDIE *leaves*. MONTGOMERY CLIFT *rows as* SHELLEY

WINTERS speaks to him. Lights on BRANDO *and* PETERS *start slowly to dim.)*

SHELLEY WINTERS

(To MONTGOMERY CLIFT.)

A Sunday Rain ... our next door neighbor drove me through the empty Sunday streets to see my brother. He's the same. My father came by the house last night for the first time since he left Cleveland and he and my mother got into a fight and my mother started laughing. She just kept saying see I can laugh ha ha nothing can hurt me anymore. Nothing you can ever do, Wallace, will ever hurt me again, no one can hurt me since my baby is lying out there in that Hospital and nobody knows whether he's going to live or die. And very loudly again she said ha ha and started walking in circles in her white shoes. My father said how goddamn crazy she was and they started pushing each other. I begged them to stop. My father looked about crazily.

I hate this house. But it was my money that helped make a down payment on it and I can come here anytime I want. I can come here and see my daughter and you can't stop me, he said.

CLARA

(To diary.)

The last week in March I called up my mother and I told her that Eddie and I were getting a divorce and I wanted to come to Cleveland right away.

She said I'm coming up there.

When, I said. When?

It was four o'clock in the afternoon.

When can you come I said.

I'll take the train tonight. I'll call you from the station.

Should I come and meet you?

No, I'll call you from the station.

She called at 10:35 that morning. She said she would take a taxi. I went down to the courtyard and waited. When she got out of the taxi I will never forget the expression on

her face. Her face had a hundred lines in it. I'd never seen her look so sad.

CLARA

(Reciting her play.)

They said: I had lost my mind, read so much, buried myself in my books. They said I should stay and teach summer school. But I went. All the way to London. Out there in the black taxi my cold hands were colder than ever. No sooner than I left the taxi and passed down a gray walk through a dark gate and into a garden where there were black ravens on the grass, when I broke down. Oow ... oww.

SHELLEY WINTERS

This morning my father came by again. He said Clara I want to talk to you. I want you to know my side.

Now, your mother has always thought she was better than me. You know Mr˙ Harrison raised her like a white girl, and your mother, mark my word, thinks she's better than me.

(It was then I could smell the whiskey on his breath ... he had already taken a drink from the bottle in his suitcase.)

(She looks anxiously at MONTGOMERY CLIFT *trying to get him to listen.)*

CLARA

(Reading from her notebook.)

He came to me in the outhouse, in the garden, in the fig tree. He told me you are an owl, ow, oww, I am your beginning, ow. You belong here with us owls in the fig tree, not to somebody that cooks for your Goddamn Father, oww, and I ran to the outhouse in the night crying oww. Bastard they say, the people in the town all say Bastard, but I -I belong to God and the owls, ow, and I sat in the fig tree. My Goddamn Father is the Richest White Man in the Town, but I belong to the owls.

(Putting down her notebook. Lights shift back to PETERS

and BRANDO *on the bed.)*

JEAN PETERS

When my brother was in the army in Germany, he was involved in a crime and was courtmartialled. He won't talk about it. I went to visit him in the stockade.

It was in a Quonset hut in New Jersey.

His head was shaven and he didn't have on any shoes. He has a vein that runs down his forehead and large brown eyes. When he was in high school he was in All City track in the two-twenty dash. We all thought he was going to be a great athlete. His dream was the Olympics. After high school he went to several colleges and left them; Morehouse (where my father went), Ohio State (where I went), and Western Reserve. I'm a failure he said. I can't make it in those schools. I'm tired. He suddenly joined the army.

After Wally left the army he worked nights as an orderly in hospitals; he liked the mental wards. For a few years every fall he started to school but dropped out after a few months. He and his wife married right before he was sent to Germany. He met her at Western Reserve and she graduated cum laude while he was a prisoner in the stockade.

(Movie music. Dark boat with MONTGOMERY CLIFT *and* SHELLEY WINTERS *reappears from opposite side*. MONTGOMERY CLIFT *rows*. CLARA *is crying.)*

SHELLEY WINTERS AND CLARA

Eddie's come from New York because my brother might die. He did not speak again today and did not move. We don't really know his condition. All we know is that his brain is possibly badly damaged. He doesn't speak or move.

JEAN PETERS

I am bleeding.

(Lights suddenly dim on MARLON BRANDO *and* JEAN PETERS. *Quite suddenly* SHELLEY WINTERS *stands up and falh "into the water." She is in the water, only her head is visible, calling silently*. MONTGOMERY CLIFT *stares at her. She continues to call silently as for help, but* MONTGOMERY CLIFT *only stares at her. Movie music*. CLARA *starts to speak as* SHELLEY WINTERS *continues to cry silently for help.)*

CLARA

The doctor said today that my brother will live; he will be brain damaged and paralyzed.

After he told us, my mother cried in my arms outside the hospital. We were standing on the steps, and she shook so that I thought both of us were going to fall headlong down the steps.

(SHELLEY WINTERS *drowns. Light goes down on* MONTGOMERY CLIFT *as he stares at* SHELLEY WINTERS *drowning. Lights on* CLARA. *Movie music. Darkness. Brief dazzling image of* COLUMBIA PICTURES LADY.)

END